



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

Office of Communications

*Karen Black
410-767-6491*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Proposal Calls for Ban on the Sale of Crib Bumpers in MD ***Safe Sleep for Babies Means “Alone, On Their Backs, and in a Crib”***

Baltimore, MD (June 8, 2012) - The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is proposing a regulation to ban the sale of baby bumper pads in the State of Maryland starting June 21, 2013. The proposed regulation and a document summarizing the evidence and basis for the ban will be published in the July 13, 2012 Maryland Register.

The Department began its investigation of baby bumper pads with a request for public comment published in the Maryland Register on April 22, 2011. In addition to its own review of the evidence, over the past year the Department has convened an expert panel of health experts, held two public meetings, and reviewed public comment.

After this extensive review, DHMH concluded that the risks to infants associated with the use of baby bumper pads outweigh potential benefits. The proposed regulation banning the sale of baby bumpers is a component of a larger effort to promote safe sleep in infants. Families are encouraged to follow the ABCs of sleep. Babies should sleep Alone, on their Backs, and in a Crib.

“The safety and health of infants in Maryland is our first priority,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of DHMH. “After an extensive year long review of the evidence and thoughtful consideration of public comment, we agree with our expert health advisors that baby bumper pads pose unreasonable risks to infants.”

“The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics supports this effort to protect babies,” said Dr. Scott Krugman, incoming Chapter President and chair of the Department of Pediatrics at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center. “We appreciate that this approach is based on extensive review of evidence and public input.”

The proposed regulation defines baby bumper pads to be banned as: “a pad or pads of non-mesh material resting directly above the mattress in a crib, running the circumference of the crib or along the length of any of the interior sides of the crib, and intended to be used until the age that

an infant pulls to stand.” The ban would not apply to vertical bumpers that wrap tightly around each individual crib rail or mesh crib liners. The Department nonetheless does not recommend the use of these novel products.

The proposed regulation provides that should the industry adopt voluntary safety standards, the Department would receive public comment and have the authority to modify the ban accordingly. Similarly, the proposed regulation provides that should the Consumer Product Safety Commission find that the benefits of certain baby bumper pads exceed the risks, the Department would be able to immediately permit their sale.

Public comment on the proposed regulation will be accepted until August 13, 2012. The proposal provides 9 months for retailers to prepare to comply with the ban. The proposed regulation banning the sale of baby bumper pads would go into effect on June 21, 2013 and will be part of a larger public education campaign on infant “safe sleep.”

All comments should be submitted by 5pm August 13, 2012. Comments may be submitted by mail to Michele Phinney, Director, Office of Regulation and Policy Coordination, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 201 W. Preston Street, Room 512, Baltimore, MD 21201 or call 410-767-6499.; TTY: 800-735-2258, or send by email to regs@dhhm.state.md.us or by fax by 410-767-6483.

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